



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CONTACT:

Governor's Office
Shareese N. DeLeaver
Henry P. Fawell
(410) 974.2316
Maj. Charles Kohler
(443) 250-7242

**Maryland Air National Guard Aircraft
To Support U.S. Central Command Operations**

C-130J Hercules makes debut

BALTIMORE, Jan. 20, 2005 – Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., today announced that nearly 20 airmen, including aircrew members and support personnel, from the Maryland Air National Guard's 175th Wing, based at Warfield Air National Guard Base in Middle River, Md., will be deployed in support of operations in the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) area of operations.

"The Maryland Air National Guard enjoys a long and rich tradition of flight with the C-130 aircraft," said Gov. Ehrlich. "This latest deployment is a testament to the men and women who make up the Maryland Air National Guard. They are true professionals in every sense of the word, having played a vital role in the war on terror at home and abroad. Kendel and I wish these citizen-airmen and their families all the best and look forward to their safe return."

"The Maryland Air National Guard has played a significant role in the testing and evaluation of the C-130J, and now is taking that knowledge and experience and applying it to real world conditions," said Maj. Gen. Bruce F. Tuxill, the Adjutant General of Maryland. "This deployment is yet another milestone in the Maryland National Guard's proud history of service to our nation."

The Maryland Air National Guard has flown hundreds of thousands of accident-free miles in more than 80 countries since receiving its first C-130B in 1980. The Maryland Air National Guard's 135th Airlift Group, a part of the 175th Wing, received its first C-130J in May 1999. Since that time, the unit has flown the aircraft extensively,

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both throughout the United States and in non-combat areas overseas. Throughout its history, the 135th Airlift Group has provided support for numerous high-profile worldwide missions including Operation Joint Endeavor in Bosnia as well as humanitarian operations in Haiti and Somalia. In 1998, Maryland Air National Guardsmen and their C-130s responded to the devastation in Honduras and other Central American countries as a result of Hurricane Mitch, as well as Bangladesh to assist with flood-relief activities. Additionally, the 135th has supported other total force missions including counter-drug operations throughout Central and South America.

The Maryland Air National Guard is comprised of a State Headquarters in Baltimore, the 175th Wing at Martin State airport and its two flying units and support staff - the 104th Fighter Squadron (A-10) and the 135th Airlift Squadron (C-130J). More than 1,600 full-time and traditional members are employed by the Maryland Air National Guard, contributing nearly \$80 million annually to Maryland's economy. The Air National Guard represents more than one-third of the total United States Air Force's total structure. Under the Total Force Policy, the Air National Guard, the Air Force Reserve and the active United States Air Force are full partners in protecting the United States and its interests at home and abroad.

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Special Notes:

Due to security considerations, media planning to cover the deployment should arrive no later than 4:45 a.m.

Those outlets planning to go "live" should allow a few extra minutes for set up. There will be space allocated for trucks to park near the flight line.

Lighting within hangers and other buildings is poor.

Most activity will be taking place outside on runway space.